

SPRING 2010

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

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White House Visitor Center
1450 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC
www.nps.gov/whho

General Kosciuszko Statue: A Century in Lafayette Park

On May 11, 1910, President William H. Taft presided at a dedication ceremony on the northeast corner of Lafayette Park honoring the great accomplishments of General Thaddeus Kosciuszko, hero of two hemispheres. Kosciuszko was a Polish army officer and skilled engineer who offered his services to the American Revolution, arriving in 1776.

Thaddeus Kosciuszko proved to be a brilliant strategist on the battlefield assuring the Continental Army's victory at Saratoga, New York. In 1778, when an attack by British forces appeared imminent in the Hudson River Valley, Kosciuszko created an ingenious fortification system along the Hudson River forcing the British to change their invasion plans.

Kosciuszko returned to Poland after the Continental Army's victory and valiantly fought to gain independence for his homeland. A century later in 1894, Polish Americans throughout the United States celebrated "the year of Kosciuszko," marking the anniversary of his return to Poland and great victory over the Russian Army at Raclawice in 1794. This enthusiasm motivated Polish Americans to erect a statue of the general in Washington, D.C. The statue was a gift from the Polish National Alliance, representing more than 250,000 members from six different Polish American organizations.

A design competition was organized and only Polish sculptors were eligible to enter. The design criteria stipulated that the cost of the statue and pedestal should be somewhere between \$35,000 and \$40,000. It further specified that "...the overall height of the statue and base must be between 30 and 32 feet and Kosciuszko must be standing, dressed in the Continental Army uniform of an American general." A federal commission chose the design submitted by Antoni Popiel.

The dedication of the statue was held on a cold, rainy day in May. Thousands of people in Polish native dress and military uniforms marched in a magnificent parade. The United States Marine Band played, speeches were delivered, and Secretary of War Jacob Dickinson accepted the grand gift. Since its unveiling, the statue has drawn countless visitors from Poland and numerous celebrations have been held for Polish Americans at the site of the monument, particularly on the February anniversary of Kosciuszko's birth.



Spring White House Garden and Grounds Tours

When spring arrives and crocuses and tulips add color to the Washington landscape, you know it's almost time for the annual Spring Garden and Grounds Tours at the White House. Held on April 17th and 18th, the two-day event attracts thousands of visitors who stroll through a rich and colorful gardening history. The grounds—dreamed of by George Washington, defined by Thomas Jefferson, and drained and filled by Ulysses Grant—are dazzling with a plethora of spring flowers and bulbs.

President Woodrow Wilson's wife, Ellen, planted the first roses in the West Garden. President John F. Kennedy expanded the Rose Garden to accommodate outdoor ceremonies. Mrs. Lyndon Johnson added the Children's Garden in the 1960s, a quiet, child-scale retreat with a fish pond. Some of the paving stones have bronze castings of hand and footprints of presidents' grandchildren over the past forty years. During the 1990s, the East Garden, named for Jacqueline Kennedy, featured sculpture displays from prominent museums throughout the United States. Last year brought the White House Kitchen Garden to the South Lawn, complete with beehives producing honey!

Free, same-day timed tickets will be available at the Ellipse Visitor Pavilion for tours on Saturday April 17, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Sunday April 18, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Ticket distribution begins each day at 8:00 a.m. Please call (202) 456-7041 for additional information.



National Park Week – April 17-25, 2010

Each year, the president proclaims a week to celebrate and recognize the country's national parks. Your national parks are living examples of the best this nation has to offer—our magnificent natural landscapes and our rich and varied heritage. Parks provide recreational experiences, opportunities to learn and grow, and places of quiet refuge. President's Park will be offering a variety of programs from Saturday, April 17, through Saturday, April 25.

This year take a moment, an hour, or a day to visit the many national parklands located right here in the Washington region. Every day a special "artist's area" will be available for children from preschool through sixth grade to draw and color "My Favorite Moment in a National Park." The White House Visitor Center will become art galleries where children can leave their memories after learning more about the many statues, monuments, and memorials in President's Park, including the White House.

Stop in the Visitor Center on Saturday, April 17, and spend some time with a Park Ranger. Free Junior Ranger Programs will be available for all ages and, with our assistance, you should earn your badge within an hour. Just look for the cheerful rangers in the grey and green uniform indoors at the center as well as outdoors in the park. Additional interpretive programs exploring "the president's neighborhood" will begin at noon at the Andrew Jackson statue in Lafayette Park Tuesday through Friday, April 20 to 23.

Look at the bulletin boards at the Ellipse Visitor Pavilion and the White House Visitor Center for additional activities.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES AT THE VISITOR CENTER



Eggs....Eggs....and More Eggs!

On Monday, April 5 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. the White House Visitor Center will present a full day of free “eggcellent” programs in association with the White House Easter Egg Roll. Visitors of all ages will enjoy completing a variety of crafts and activities available in the Center. *No reservations are required for the Visitor Center program. For additional information, call (202) 208-1631.*

“What’s in YOUR Backpack, Teddy?”

This free, one hour program about our greatest environmental and conservationist president, “Teddy” Roosevelt will be held at 10:00 a.m., 12 noon and 2:00 p.m. on **Saturday, April 24** in the Visitor Center. This family oriented program welcomes all, including your smaller “guests” such as your favorite stuffed animals – especially bears! Learn more about the exciting life of an inquisitive child growing up in New York City, who became our youngest president. We will explore his backpack and discover many facets of Teddy Roosevelt’s life. Thought you knew everything about this president? Okay, what’s an ocular? How many Rough Riders did he lead? What do you do with a medicine ball? Join our ranger-led indoor program and hear about a canal, a white fleet, a submarine ride, and his family and many, many pets! *No reservations necessary, but programs are limited to 25. Call (202) 208-1631 for additional information. Crafts programs will be available for all.*

Junior Ranger Day

On **Saturday, April 24** between 9:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. all visitors at the Visitor Center will also celebrate National Junior Ranger Day as we host several interactive games of “Are You Smarter Than A Park Ranger?” complete with prizes! Park Rangers will also assist all potential Junior Rangers in activities towards achieving their Junior Ranger badge and certificate. Join our Honor Roll of Junior Rangers online! And, don’t forget to go online and participate in our national WebRanger program!

On My Honor....

The Ellipse in President’s Park is home to the Boy Scout Memorial. The memorial erected in 1964 honors all who have participated in scouting throughout the years. Join a Park Ranger to learn more about the Boy Scout Memorial and the Boy Scouts of America as they celebrate their 100th anniversary in 2010. Ranger talks will be held at the memorial every Saturday in June at 1:30pm. Please meet the ranger at the memorial located on the east side of the Ellipse just north of the intersection of 15th Street NW and Constitution Avenue NW.

We Remember

Monday, May 31 is Memorial Day. Originally designated to remember the soldiers who gave their lives during the Civil War, today, the holiday honors all fallen U.S servicemen and women throughout history. Throughout the United States, thousands of memorials have been erected to honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to the nation. The Ellipse in President’s Park is home to the Second Division Memorial. This memorial commemorates the sacrifices of this storied unit during World War I, World War II, and the Korean War. Join a Park Ranger on **Monday, May 31** at 1:30pm at the Second Division Memorial to learn about the history of the Second Division and the creation of the memorial. The Memorial is located near the intersection of 17th Street NW and Constitution Avenue NW.

ASK A PARK RANGER

Welcome Visitors

Our Park staff is ready, willing and able to answer all your questions. Look for the unique hat every Park Ranger wears. These President’s Park employees have a wealth of information and are well-versed in almost all presidential trivia questions, too! Our Park volunteers wear yellow and green baseball hats and also know about what’s happening in the area. Brochures and maps can be obtained at the Information Desk in the Visitor Center, as well as at the Ellipse Visitor Pavilion, which also has a bulletin board with up-to-date information.



Talks and Walks

Park rangers and volunteers present interpretive talks daily at 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. on topics of interest about the White House and President’s Park. These talks and walks, posted daily in the Visitor Center, last 20 minutes to one hour. The programs will give you a bird’s eye view of President’s Park history, as well as people who have lived in the neighborhood, the many events held within the Park, and the monuments and memorials located here.

Calling All Junior Rangers!

National Park Service Junior Rangers are important people because they help park rangers protect and take care of the resources of President’s Park, as well as other National Parks. This is a big job because there are 392 areas in the U.S. National Park System! A Junior Ranger also learns about the buildings, objects, plants, animals and history of the National Parks, and shares that knowledge with their friends and family. *Take part in the President’s Park Junior Ranger Program by requesting a Junior Ranger activity booklet at the Information Desk in the Visitor Center.*

On this date: June 2, 1886

The only president to be married in the White House was President Grover Cleveland, who was our twenty-second as well as our twenty-fourth president. On a Wednesday evening, in a private ceremony in the Blue Room, Frances Folsom married a man she had known almost her entire life. At age 21, she became the youngest first lady. A beautiful, charming and well-educated woman, having just received a degree from Mills College in New York, the new first lady was extremely popular. Satin-covered cake boxes trimmed with lace and cards signed by the bride and groom were given to the wedding guests. There were no pictures of the wedding released to the public. Americans took great delight in the birth of two of the five Cleveland children during Grover Cleveland’s second presidency.



Engraving: Library of Congress



Experience Your America

Programs may change due to reassignment of rangers to other duties that serve the mission of the National Park Service. Every effort is made to maintain the schedule as printed. Please contact the Visitor Center at (202) 208-1631 to confirm programs and dates. The Center is open daily from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. If you would like to be added to our mailing list, e-mail us at whho_presidents_park@nps.gov.

This calendar is sponsored by the National Park Service and the White House Historical Association.